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27 August 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: SB/RR

SUBJECT: Comments of Canadian Communist on role of Soviet in Events in CSSR

1. The following information reported by AECASSOWARY/29 came from a Canadian citizen who claims to have close contacts with individual Canadian Communists and with Soviet Embassy employees in Ottawa.

2. According to Les HUNT, Chairman of the Soviet-Canadian Friendship Society, who visited in Moscow and Kiev from mid-July to early August 1968, the liberalization in Czechoslovakia was being given priority attention on the highest levels of the Soviet Government and the CP. Events in Czechoslovakia were tied in with developments in Soviet internal policy. The two main factors which were being considered were (a) the effect events in the CSSR were having on Soviet citizens, and (b) the impact of any eventual armed intervention on the entire communist movement. The probability of intervention on the part of the United States or the West in general was considered non-existent.

3. According to Les HUNT, BREZHNEV and SUSLOV lead the conservatives. The reformers are headed by KOSYGIN, POLYANSKIY and MAZUROV. SHELEPIN was a conservative, but in late July of this year switched to the side of the reformers. PODGORNY was playing the role of mediator between the conservatives and the reformers.

SB/CA

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